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PERILOUS TIMES

The Supreme Court decision in America

A few weeks ago, five of the nine Supreme Court judges of the United States decided to grant marriage status to 'same sex' couples, thus making 'same sex m' legal throughout the United States and taking away from the States of USA the right to rule against same sex m [we are using 'm' because we refuse to acknowledge that the word marriage can mean anything else other than the union of a man and a woman as ordained by God from the beginning].

Anti-Christ at work

This decision which was strongly opposed by four of the nine justices, is a stark example of anti-Christ men speaking **“pompous words against the Most High,”** and persecuting **“the saints of the Most High”** intending **“to change times and law”** (Daniel 7:25). Paul speaks of these men in referring to the coming of the lawless one, **“With all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth ... And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned, who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness”** 2Thess.2:10-12.

“Perilous”

We are living in perilous times. **“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come”** 2 Timothy 3:1.

The word “perilous” means: harsh, savage, difficult, dangerous, painful, fierce, grievous, hard to deal with. The word describes a society that is barren of virtue but abounding with vices.

Characteristics of the perverse generation

Paul proceeds to describe the perilous times in 2 Timothy 3:2-4. He uses 18 **negative words** to describe these times. Men will be: **lovers of themselves** – taking “selfies”, that is always self-focused; **lovers of money** – people love money whether they have it or not; **boasters, proud, blasphemers** – speaking disrespectfully of the things of God; **disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.**

It includes religious people

Then Paul says that these are people who have **“a form of godliness but denying its power”** (v.5). Who are these people? It seems they are people who are satisfied with attending a church, but that church is dead to the things of God. Western countries are full of such people and their churches corporately have openly supported 'same sex m' and some of these denominations openly ordain homosexuals to the

ministry. These are dangerous people. Paul says, **“and from such people turn away!”**

“For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, lead away by various lusts” 2Tim.3:6. These ones are **“always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” v.7.** In Australia we have church groups joining the far left wing and demonstrating on the streets against sensible conservative policy. We are plagued with what is called ‘political correctness’. No longer is one supposed to speak the truth.

Those who dabble in the demonic

Paul then refers to **“Jannes and Jambres”**. These men were magicians in the court of Pharaoh, who opposed Moses. This is a reference to witchcraft and sorcery. Such ones **“resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith” (v.8).** This can include so called Christian ministers who are resisting the truth, refusing to distinguish between right and wrong according to the word of God. These are ministers who combine spiritism with Christian religion; who support traditional ceremonies but call themselves Reverends in the church. Some are even guilty of using demonic power to copy the miracles of the Bible. Do not be disturbed by people who seem to have spiritual power. Listen to their words to see if they are speaking the truth. **“They will progress no further for their folly will be manifest to all” (v.9).**

WHAT IS THE ANSWER TO LIVING IN PERILOUS TIMES

Paul immediately gives us the answer. We are to **carefully follow the doctrine and life-style example of the apostle.** Paul gives nine aspects of his life and ministry in and for Christ that are able to be followed carefully: **i) my doctrine** – the gospel, the teaching; **ii) manner of life** – example of apostolic leaders (**Heb.13:7, 17**); **iii) purpose** – this is the “why” we do what we do; **iv) faith** – what we believe – **Jude 3**, what did the first apostles preach (**Acts 5:42**); **v) longsuffering** – it is necessary for living in these days; grace is given to manifest longsuffering; it is a character attribute we need to foster in our lives; **vi) love** – **2 Peter 1:5-7**, “love” is the last attribute to attain to in Peter's list; love is the manifestation of maturity; **vii) perseverance** – endure, hold up under great pressure; **viii) persecutions** – pressure comes in this way; **ix) afflictions.**

Paul declares that out of all the afflictions the Lord delivered him. Jesus will help us; we will get deliverance; He will show us the way out. Paul warns us that all who desire to live godly will suffer persecution (**v.12**). Evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse. It is a downhill slope; it continues to get worse. It is a world where many are deceiving and being deceived (**v.13**).

Disciples are to continue in the things they have learned and been assured of. This is discipleship: being taught and knowing from whom you have learned. We are to know the Holy Scriptures which make us wise for salvation in Christ Jesus (**v.15**). Throughout the church world discipleship is lacking. But our maturity can only come through discipleship, receiving the word of God which is fully reliable, changing our

lives, and enabling us to reach nations with the word. We need to be grounded and founded in the word so we can teach others.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness” 2Tim.3:16.

The Charge to Timothy in the midst of perilous times

“I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom” 2Tim.4:1

- **Preach the Word!** Be ready in season and out of season.
- **Convince** - do your best to convince people of the truth.
- **Rebuke** – it is not popular to rebuke in these modern times, but we need to be ready to rebuke.
- **Exhort** – this is the prophetic word giving people hope.
- We are to do this with **all longsuffering**. Do not give up.
- **Teaching** – giving more of the detail, putting things together clearly; showing the fulfilment of all things in Christ.

‘Longsuffering’ from the Greek means having a long temper, that is, denoting lenience, forbearance, fortitude, patient endurance. The ability to endure persecution and ill-treatment. It is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22).

We need to develop this fruit of longsuffering in these dark and difficult days that we live in.

The time has come when people will not endure sound doctrine, but rather turn to fables; these people are described as having itchy ears and following teachers who only feed them what they want to hear (**2Timothy 4:4**)

Paul charges us to be **“watchful in all things”**. We are to endure; we are to do the work of the evangelist, that is, we are to continue to preach the gospel; we are to continue to tell people about Jesus (**v.5**). Recently a woman came in off the street into Shiloh and has been born again. She comes from a very difficult and destructive background, but she has found Jesus because we do not fail to preach and teach Jesus at Shiloh.

The result of keeping the faith is to be poured out as a drink offering. What is your hope of reward? Are you willing to lay your life down and be poured out as a drink offering? (**v.6**)

Paul talking about sons, not “churches” - 2 Timothy 4:9-16

Demas had forsaken Paul, ***“having loved this present world” (v.10)***; other brothers were away on mission; only Luke was with him. Paul asked for Mark to be sent to him, saying ***“for he is useful to me for ministry” (v.11)***. Mark was now useful to Paul. Remember earlier Paul had refused to work with Mark because he had been unfaithful on a previous ministry trip (**Acts 15:38**). Paul had sent Tychicus to Ephesus. He needed Timothy to bring his cloak and books and parchments (**v.13**). Alexander

had done Paul harm and he had handed him over saying, **"May the Lord repay him according to his works"** (v.15). Paul says, **"No one stood with me"** (v.16).

Further warnings in 1 Timothy

"Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" 1Timothy 4:1. These will be **"speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron"** (v.2). We witness senior politicians speaking such lies; performing as hypocrites. We see all sorts of leaders in contemporary society who manifest no discernment as to what is right or wrong. Even many who are defending traditional marriage do not understand marriage in truth, but are simply trying to defend a good tradition.

In **verse 3** Paul is referring to those who forbid to marry. This has been a major issue in the Roman Catholic church for many hundreds of years and has caused enormous problems for priests and unfortunately for the victims of sexual abuse.

But today the issue is not so much forbidding to marry, but the compromise of many churches to practice same sex 'm'. Recently in Canada a Mennonite church hosted the wedding of two homosexuals. The Mennonite church has a godly history, but by the year 2015 they are beginning to seriously deny that godly history.

Again we ask: what is the answer to this? What do we do? The verses immediately before **1 Timothy 4** are two of the most powerful verses in the Bible. They tell us: that the house of God is the church of the living God; that we should know how to conduct ourselves in God's house; that the church is the pillar and ground of the truth. Then there is the amazing confession of the mystery explaining who Jesus is: **"God was manifested in the flesh"** (1Tim.3:15-16).

The first apostles were preaching and teaching Jesus the Christ (**Acts 5:42**). People were saved by hearing the preaching of Jesus Christ. Paul goes on to instruct Timothy to be a good minister of Jesus Christ, to instruct the brethren in these things; to be nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which he has learnt from Paul (**1Tim.4:6**).

To be a good minister of Jesus Christ means that **"we both labour and suffer reproach"** (v.10).

We are to respond to the perilous times we live in by being an example

Paul tells Timothy to **"be an example to the believers in word, in conduct [behaviour], in love [a life laid down], in spirit [the kingdom is in the spirit], in faith [Jesus Christ is the only foundation], in purity [virtue, moral excellence]"** (1Tim.4:12).

Then Paul instructs Timothy to **"give attention to reading"**, that is the public reading of Scripture, **"to exhortation"** which is prophetic preaching that encourages and comforts the brethren; **"to doctrine"** that is the teaching (v.13). These three things should be in every meeting:

- i. reading Scripture
- ii. exhortation – preaching

iii. doctrine - teaching

We are to stir up the gift of God that is in us (**1Tim.4:14**); we are to desire earnestly the gifts, especially to prophesy (**1Corinthians 14:1**).

"Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you" 1Tim.4:15-16

The doctrine is the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ

In Samaria Philip preached the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ (**Acts 8:12**). Philip preached Jesus from the Scripture (**Acts 8:35-38**). Jesus spoke about the kingdom, that it is in the here and now, in the world (**Matthew 13:37-43**).

The apostles were beaten for preaching Jesus. When they were released they continued (**Acts 5:41-42**). Paul lived in a rented house preaching the kingdom of God and teaching everything that concerns Jesus Christ (**Acts 28:30-31**).

Finally Paul found himself on his own, ***"but the Lord stood with me and strengthened me so that the message might be preached fully through me and that all the Gentiles might hear"*** (**2Tim.4:17**). Paul lived in perilous times, but the Lord stood with Paul. The message was fully preached through Paul so that the nations would hear.

Paul was delivered from the mouth of the lion by the Lord. Paul found himself in circumstances totally out of his control and Jesus delivered him. Paul was confident of continual deliverance and preservation for the kingdom.

Paul blessed Timothy saying, ***"the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit"*** (**2Tim.4:22**). Paul was saying, 'Timothy, you will need to know the strength of the Lord and His presence with you and in you, in your spirit. You will know you are not standing alone'.

Then Paul says ***"Grace be with you."***

Paul Galligan

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